

Beaver Trapping Questionnaire 2004-05

By Brian Dhuey and John Olson

Abstract

An estimated 4,542 people trapped for beaver during the 2004-05 beaver trapping season. They harvested an estimated 71,225 beaver. Most beaver were caught in body-gripping traps (72%), foothold traps were next at 23%, and snares were last at 8%. The number of trappers who trap beaver and harvest has increased from 2003-04 levels.

Methods

A special beaver trapping questionnaire was included with the annual furtrapper questionnaire which was sent to a sample of 6,000 people who purchased a resident trapping license or a conservation patron license. The sample was selected from the 2003-04 resident trapping ($\approx 3,650$) and the conservation patron ($\approx 2,350$) license holders who indicated they were trappers (Fig. 1). Both questionnaires were mailed at the end of the trapping season, April 30th in the northern one third of the state. Trappers were asked if they trapped for beavers during the 2004-05 season, where they trapped, the number of days they trapped, the type and number of traps they used, and the number of beavers they caught. They were also asked the percentage of their pelts they sold in and out of Wisconsin. A second mailing was made to non-respondents. These data were entered into the DNR UNIX computer and summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

Results

All duplicate responses were removed from the survey pool. Replies were obtained from 1,782 (30%) of the 6,000 trappers receiving questionnaires. Respondents to the questionnaires trapped for beaver 25% of the time during the 2004-05 season. This is an increase in trapper effort from 2003-2004 season when 24% of trappers trapped for beaver. Beaver harvest by beaver management zone is shown in Table 1.

An estimate of beaver trappers was derived by multiplying the percent of respondents who said they trapped beaver by the total license sales for each of the two trapping license types. These data provided an estimate of 4,542 beaver trappers during the 2004-05 season. The number of beaver trappers who participated in the 2004-05 season was more than the 3,839 that trapped in 2003-04.

Trappers harvested an estimated 71,225 beaver in 2004-05. The entire state with the exception of the Mississippi River Zone was open until 30 April for beaver trapping for the seventh consecutive season. This was done to simplify seasons and reduce beaver populations.

On the average, trappers trapped 25 days for beaver, had 11 sets out each day, and caught 15.7 beaver each. This is in comparison to 2003-04 levels when trappers averaged 26 days, 10 sets, and 16.1 beaver. Trappers used body-gripping traps in 72% of their sets, foothold traps in 23%, and snares in 8%. As a result, 73% of the beaver were caught in body-gripping traps, 22% in foothold traps, and 6% in snares. These numbers were very similar to the 2003-04 beaver trapping season harvest by trap type.

Most trappers felt that beaver populations were stable in all beaver zones (Table 2). Trappers also felt that the otter population has increased in the Central and Southern part of the state, while the population is stable in the Northern part of the state (Table 3).

The harvest in 2003-04(71,225) was 15% more than the 2003-04 total of 62,126. The price paid for beaver pelts remained the same (\$14.86) in 2004-05 as the 2003-04 season. Weather conditions for 2004-05 season were very similar to the 2003-04 season with early and persistent light snowfall and average to below average temperatures for most of the late fall and winter.

Table 1. *Number of respondents, mean number of days trapped, sets, and catch in the regular beaver season in 2004-05 by beaver management zone.*

Beaver Zone	# of Responses	Mean # of Days Trapped	Mean # of Sets	Mean # Trapped in Regular Season
A	161	27.8	13.9	21.0
B	85	24.7	14.0	16.1
C	195	22.5	7.2	9.3
D	18	21.6	14.4	28.9
Statewide	459	24.7	11.1	15.7

Table 2. *Beaver Trapper's observations of beaver populations in the zone they trapped.*

Beaver Zone	Stable	Increasing	Decreasing
Zone A	51.8%	24.7%	23.5%
Zone B	48.8%	13.1%	38.1%
Zone C	47.5%	20.9%	31.6%
Zone D	52.6%	0.0%	47.4%

Table 3. *Beaver Trapper's observations of otter populations in the zone they trapped.*

Otter Zone	Stable	Increasing	Decreasing
Northern	55.8%	35.4%	8.8%
Central	39.4%	46.5%	14.1%
Southern	30.1%	61.5%	8.4%

PART II.																																								
1. Did you trap beaver during the 2004-2005 season? <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (2) No		2. What percentage of your beaver SETS use conibears, what percentage use leghold traps, and what percentage use snares? <div style="text-align: right;"> _____ % Conibear _____ % Leghold _____ % Snares </div>																																						
3. What percentage of your beaver CATCH came from conibear sets, what percentage from leghold sets, and what percentage from snares? <div style="text-align: right;"> _____ % Conibear _____ % Leghold _____ % Snares </div>																																								
4. How many of the beaver that you caught since June, 2004 did you sell? <div style="text-align: right;"> _____ beaver </div>		5. What percent of your catch did you sell: <div style="text-align: right;"> _____ % In Wisconsin _____ % Outside Wisconsin </div>																																						
6. Which beaver management zone did you trap in most? (See attached beaver zone map)																																								
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Zone A (north of Hwy. 64, west of Hwy. 13) <input type="checkbox"/> Zone B (north of Hwy. 64, east of Hwy. 13) </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Zone C (south of Hwy. 64) <input type="checkbox"/> Zone D (Mississippi River) </div> </div>																																								
7. Please fill in the blanks below for each zone in which you trapped for beaver during the 2004-2005 season regardless of whether you caught any beaver.																																								
Zone	Avg. No. of Sets	No. Days Trapped	No. Beaver Caught Regular Season	No. Beaver Caught Damage Programs																																				
8A. Based on your observations in the zones you trapped, are beaver populations stable, increasing, or decreasing? (Please reply only for zones you trapped.) <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: left;">Beaver Zones</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Stable</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Increasing</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Decreasing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone A</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone B</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone C</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zone D</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> (Note: See attached beaver zone map.)		Beaver Zones	Stable	Increasing	Decreasing	Zone A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zone B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zone C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zone D	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8B. Based on your observations in the zones you trapped, are otter populations stable, increasing, or decreasing? (Please reply only for zones you trapped.) <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: left;">Otter Zones</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Stable</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Increasing</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Decreasing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Central</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>South</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> (Note: See attached otter zone map.)			Otter Zones	Stable	Increasing	Decreasing	North	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Central	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	South	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Figure 1. 2004-05 Beaver Trapping Questionnaire.

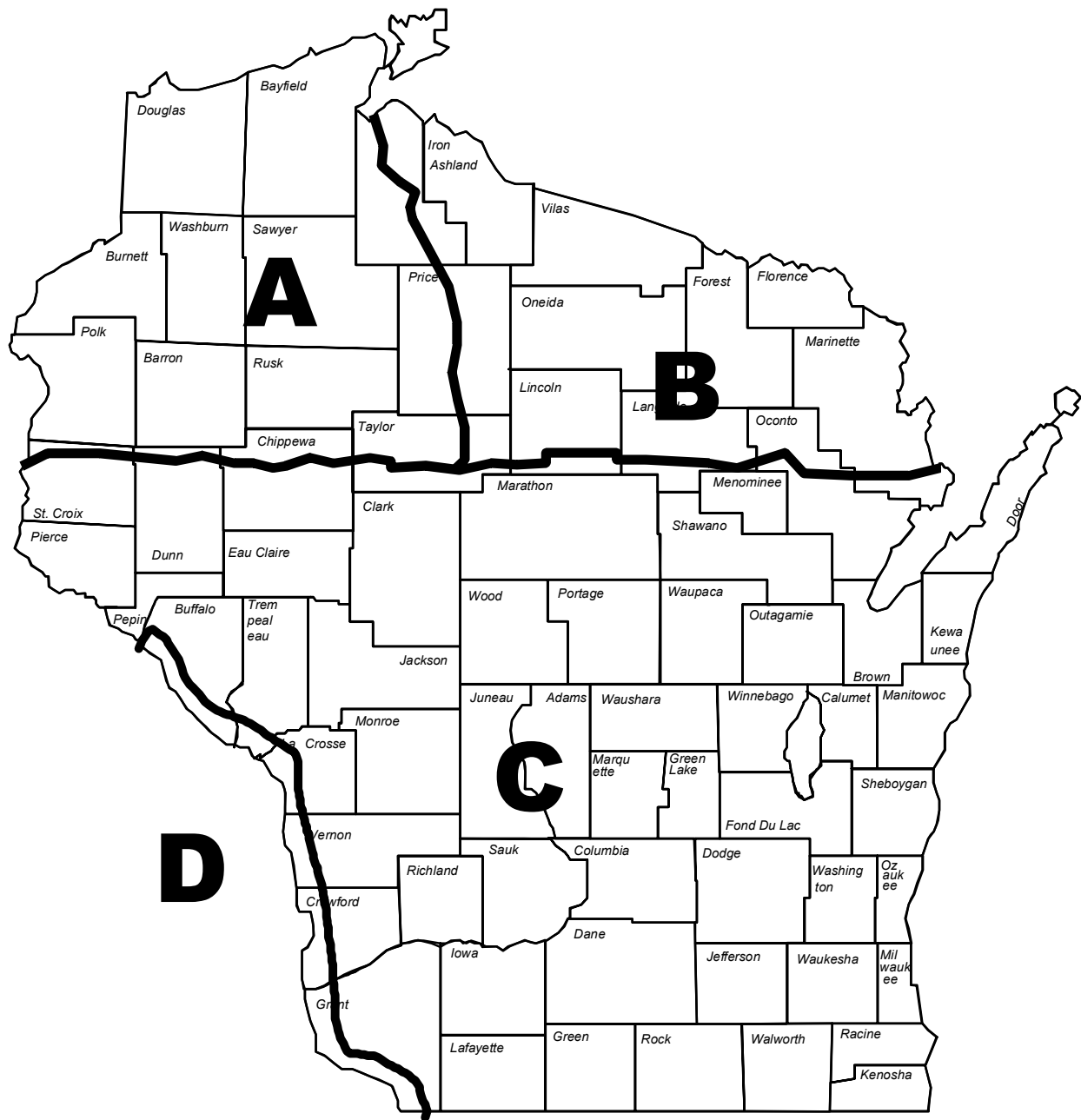


Figure 2. 2004-05 Wisconsin beaver trapping zones.